Chapter 3

Well~
WHAT PERFECT WEATHER FOR A CONTEST IN THE PRESENCE OF OUR LORD!
HIDEYOSHI, SURELY I ORDERED YOU TO PARTICIPATE, TOO?
SO WHY HAVE YOU BEEN LOITERING HERE?
Observer
INDEED, THE JUDGE ALSO PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN DETERMINING THE FIGHT!
Waaaah
AND WITH THAT SAID, THE NINTH MATCH!
KINBEE-DONO AGAINST.- HMM? HAVEN'T HEARD THIS NAME BE-, , FORE
SHI-CHISLIKE-DONO!
STAND
A NEW-COMER? EVEN SO, I WILL TAKE NO MERCY. DON'T THINK BADLY OF ME
PLEASE TREAT ME WELL
BEGIN!
OOOOOH
Transcendence

CUT
THE MATCH IS OVER! SHICHISUKE-DONO WINS!
HIGH!
ONE WIN OFF THE BAT... GOOD.
I HAD BELIEVED RANMARU WOULD WIN BY A LANDSLIDE, BUT THIS MAY PROVE TO BE INTERESTING
HMM. THIS SHICHISUKE FIGHTS EXCEEDINGLY WELL.

A few hours prior
in the second residence...
A CONTEST?
A TEST OF SWORD SKILLS
IT'S HELD ON NOBUNAGA-SAMA'S WHIM.
WELL, RANMARU WILL LIKELY BE VICTORIOUS THIS TIME AS WELL
WOULD IT BE PERMISSIBLE FOR ME TO GO AND WATCH THIS CONTEST?
WHAT?
IT WILL BE HELPFUL TO KNOW THE FIGHTING STYLES OF THE WARRIORS AT AZUCHI
OF COURSE, NOT IN THE APPEARANCE OF THE PRINCESS. I WILL MIX IN WITH THEM DISGUISED
MIX IN WITH THEM?
SHINE

Good, the transformation worked.
Oh...

I DON'T MIND GO THEN
THANK YOU VERY MUCH
IT SEEMS YOUR ABILITY IS GREATER THAN I EXPECTED.
MI-MITSU-HIDE-DONO!
Flat
?!
There's nothing
UNDER-STOOD
IN OTHER WORDS, HE WANTS ME TO WIN
I WOULD RATHER AVOID STANDING OUT TOO MUCH,
HUH...
HOWEVER, MERELY WATCHING WOULD BE BORING, SO GO AND FIGHT.
YOUR SKILLS MIGHT SPUR AN UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT.

But I will aim for victory in this contest...

If my employer wishes it.

THAT'S ENOUGH! SHINNOSUKE-DONO WINS!
Domm
OKAY, LET'S SEE NEXT IS...
OH!
THE BIG MATCHUP HAS COME AT LAST!
SMIRK
It's finally time
If this is a mission. I will accomplish it.
Transcendence

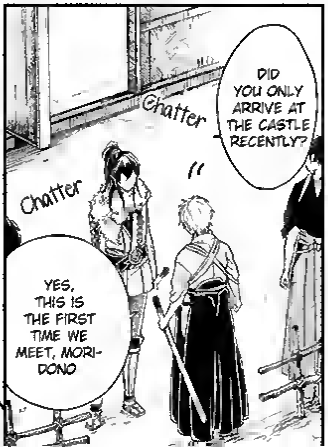
WOOHOO
Mori Kanmaru
THERE IS NO NEED TO HOLD BACK
START!
CRASH
SO STRONG
Even though I'm a ninja
From a young age, I've continued to tirelessly train in all manner of martial arts.

I broke inside!
DASH
I cannot show weakness in front of my em player!
HE'S FAST.
BASH
One more time!
!
CLANG
YOUR SIDE IS OPEN!
Transcendence
UH...
FWOOSH

TO THINK THAT HE COULD COUNTER IN AN INSTANT...
RANMARU WINS!!!
CHEER!
THE MATCH HAS BEEN DECIDED

SHI-CHISUKE... WAS IT?
IT WAS MY LOSS. YOU'RE IMPRESSIVE

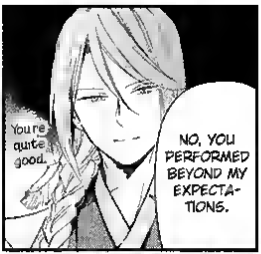
RANMARU
HUH?


Chatter
Chatter
DID YOU ONLY ARRIVE AT THE CASTLE RECENTLY?
YES, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE MEET, MORI-DONO

Gentle
YOU MAY CALL ME RAN-MARU.
NEXT, MATCH NUMBER ELEVEN! RAN-MARU!
HUH? ALREADY MY TURN AGAIN...
GOOD LUCK.
I've seen nothing but his stern expression so
OH, IT'S NOTHING.
He smiled!
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
ANNOYED
ANNOYED
ANNOYED

I AM TRULY SORRY, MI- I WAS TSUHIDE-NO MATCH DONO FOR RAN-MARU'S STRENGTH
Will he smile like that to Kikyou someday?
Chatter
Chatter
OH...
Ranmaru, your turn.

YES, MASTER!
YOUR DEFENSE IS WEAK BRACE YOURSELF MORE.


You're quite good.
NO, YOU PERFORMED BEYOND MY EXPECTATIONS.

SHE HAS THE SKILLS, AND HER POWERS OF TRANSFORMATION ARE INTERESTING, TOO.
THERE ARE STILL PLACES I'M NOT FAMILIAR WITH YET.
OH, NOTHING. I WILL EXPLORE THE CASTLE AGAIN TOMORROW
WHAT?

PERHAPS YOU HAD A RATHER CAPABLE TEACHER.
Hmm

YET, AS A SHINOBI, THERE'S STILL SOMETHING A LITTLE UNRELIABLE ABOUT HER.
His expression really is stiff.
RANMARU-DONO, WE SEEM TO MEET QUITE FREQUENTLY.
It had been bothering me.
PRINCESS, YOU CAN DROP THE FORMALITIES WITH ME
BUT...
I DON'T MIND.
CHIRP
CHIRP
OH.
WELL THEN, RANMARU...

I HEARD FROM MY BROTHER THAT YOU WERE VICTORIOUS AT THE CONTEST THE OTHER DAY
HOW WONDERFUL
NO, AS SOMEONE SERVING CLOSE TO NOBUNAGA-SAMA, THAT WAS ONLY TO BE EXPECTED.
IT WASN'T A FEAT WORTHY OF YOUR PRAISE
BESIDES, THERE IS SOMETHING I REGRET
A REGRET?

THERE WAS ONE PERSON VERY SKILLED WITH THE SWORD.
I WON THIS TIME, BUT HE FOUGHT WITH VERY WELL TRAINED SWORDSMANSHIP.
I BELIEVE HE WAS A NEWCOMER SINCE I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM BEFORE.
That's
AND SO, I WANTED TO INQUIRE ABOUT HIS MASTER,
BUT HE HAD GONE BEFORE I'D REALIZED

DO YOU REMEMBER THE NAME OF THIS PERSON?
I BELIEVE IT WAS... SHICHI-SUKE
SO IT REALLY WAS ME
I WISHED TO FIGHT HIM ONCE MORE IF POSSI-BLE...
IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT, RANMARU.
AS LONG AS YOU REMEM-BER HIS NAME, YOU WILL SURE-LY MEET HIM AGAIN

PERHAPS THE ONE CALLED SHICHISUKE ONLY SLIPPED AWAY WITHOUT TELLING YOU DUE TO SOME CIRCUMSTANCES...
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT HE ALSO WANTS TO TALK TO YOU AGAIN, RANMARU.
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
OH, NO... IT'S JUST THAT AS THE YOUNGER SISTER OF MITSUHIDE-DONO, YOU ARE...
BA-DUMP
Have I said something bad?
OH, NO, IT'S NOTHING.
I AM GRATEFUL FOR YOUR CONCERN.
Excuse me.
I must confirm the things he's said later...
I HAVEN'T MADE MYSELF SEEM SUSPICIOUS, HAVE I?

O PRINCESS, FLUTTERING ABOUT LIKE A LOST BUTTERFLY
AKECHI PRINCESS, HAVE YOU GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO AZUCHI?
NOT YET, FOR IT HAS ONLY BEEN A FEW DAYS SINCE MY ARRIVAL AT THE CASTLE
YOU ARE A GUEST FROM SAKAMOTO, NO? VERY WELL THEN, I, NOBUNAGA, SHALL PERSONALLY ENTERTAIN YOU
HUH?
NOBUYUKI-SAMA
NOBUNAGA-SAMA

THP
TOR
TOR
HOW DOES THE TEA TASTE, KIKYOU?
ABSO-LUTELY WONDER-FUL
WHAT A FORCEFUL PERSON...
HMPH... NATURALLY, IT WAS PRE-PARED BY ME
She was pulled along...
GULP
Although he told me social rank-ing is irrele vant at a tea ceremony...
IT'S STILL DAUNTING AFTER ALL
YES, IT IS TRULY A BEAUTIFUL TEAROOM
INDEED, IT WAS A GIFT FROM HISAHIDE
THE TEXTURE IS EXCEP-TIONAL, IS IT NOT?
FOR INSTANCE, THIS TEA CONTAINER IS FROM TSUKU-MONASU, IS IT NOT?
MY BROTHER'S TEA IS CER-TAINLY PRAISE-WORTHY
BUT NO MAT-TER WHERE YOU LOOK THE WARES IN THIS TEA-ROOM ARE ALL NATIONALLY RENOWNED WORKS

AS IF IT'S DECLARING THAT THE WORLD IS YOURS, BROTHER.

WHAT?

THERE ARE NO LONGER ANY VESSELS OUT OF YOUR REACH, ARE THERE, BROTHER?

YOU CAN OBTAIN ANYTHING YOU FANCY AND ADORN IT IN THIS TEA-ROOM

NOBUYUKI, I AM NOT TAKING THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO GATHER TEA VESSELS

OF COURSE I AM AWARE OF THAT

AND THAT...

YOU ARE NOT GOING TO WAR WITH OTHER REGIONS TO AMUSE YOURSELF WITH A CONQUERING GAME.
Is that so?
Then for what reason is he going to war.
FEUDAL LORDS ARE ALWAYS REPEATEDLY AT WAR IN ORDER TO BROADEN THEIR OWN TERRITORY.
IF YOU HAVE NO DESIRE FOR TERRITORY, FOR WHAT REASON DO YOU GO TO WAR, NOBUNAGA-SAMA?
WHAT IS IT? WHY DO YOU LOOK SURPRISED?
IS IT NOT OBVIOUS?

IN ORDER TO END WARS AND CREATE AN INTERESTING WORLD.
I WISH FOR THE FUTURE BEYOND COMBAT...
A RIVETING WORLD...
THAT IS WHAT I WISH FOR.
KIKYOU,
WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?

My dream?
...
WHY ARE YOU SILENT?
PARDON ME, YOU ASKED A QUESTION I HAD NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT.
WHAT A PITY.
NOT EVERYONE IS CAPABLE OF DESCRIBING THEIR DREAMS AS YOU DO, BROTHER.
NATURALLY, WHEN PEOPLE ARE BORN, THEIR PATHS ARE DECIDED.
IF YOU ARE THE LEGITIMATE HEIR OF A WARRIOR, YOU SHALL SUCCEED THE FAMILY.
IF YOU ARE BORN A PRINCESS YOU SHALL FORM CONNECTIONS FOR THE FAMILY THROUGH MARRIAGE.
THAT GOES WITHOUT SAYING.
IT IS NORMAL IN THIS WORLD FOR MANY TO LIVE WITHOUT KNOWING A DREAM.

A LIFE SPENT WORRYING ABOUT "BIRTH" AND "FATE" WOULD BE EXCEEDINGLY BORING.
A HUMAN LIFE IS BUT FIFTY YEARS.
IF ONE HAS EVEN A MOMENT'S LIFE, HE SHOULD EMBRACE HIS DREAM AND LIVE FOR IT.
IN THAT CASE, FIFTY YEARS WILL BE AS FRUITFUL AS ONE'S GREATEST FANTASIES

Is a dream important for living?

Nobody in my village taught me this

nor have I ever been troubled by not having one.

However...

I was born in a family of ninjas and I have lived my life as a ninja

I obey orders and complete missions

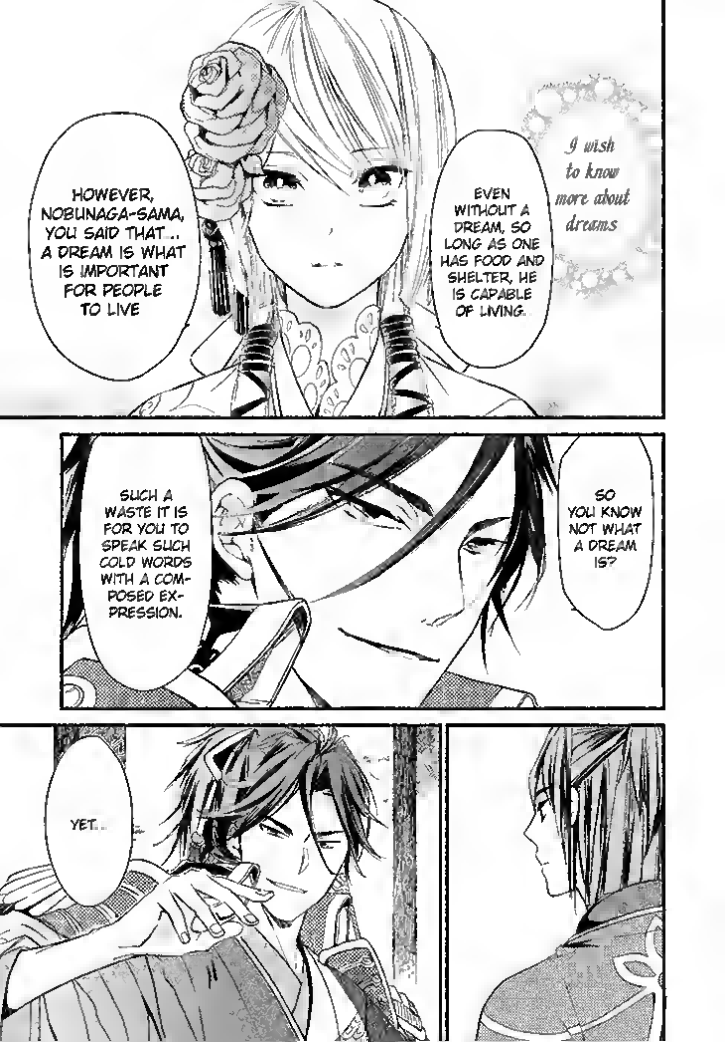
In order to live, that is a given.

Transcendence

WHAT TROUBLES YOU? DID MY SPEECH BORE YOU?
NO... I WAS MERELY CONSIDERING WHETHER A DREAM WAS SOMETHING ONE MUST HAVE IN ORDER TO LIVE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

BA-DUMP


I wish to know more about dreams
EVEN WITHOUT A DREAM, SO LONG AS ONE HAS FOOD AND SHELTER, HE IS CAPABLE OF LIVING.
HOWEVER, NOBUNAGA-SAMA, YOU SAID THAT .. A DREAM IS WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE
SO YOU KNOW NOT WHAT A DREAM IS?
SUCH A WASTE IT IS FOR YOU TO SPEAK SUCH COLD WORDS WITH A COMPOSED EXPRESSION.
YET..

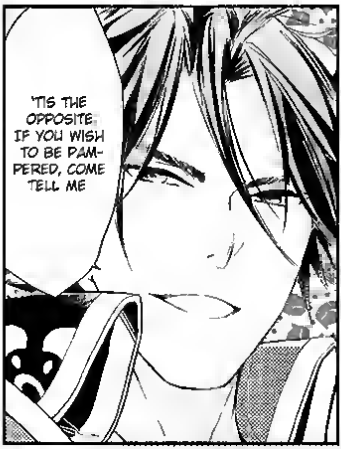
Such a large palm
As if it could grab everything it desires
HOW INTERESTING IT MUST BE SHOULD THIS COLD PRINCESS COME TO PASSIONATELY DESIRE SOMETHING.

EEEK
FLICK!
KIKYOU, I SHALL TEACH YOU ABOUT DREAMS
?!

FOR A DREAM, YOU WOULD SACRIFICE ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING
IT IS SOMETHING YOU YEARN FOR SO PASSIONATELY THAT YOU COULD HEEDLESSLY OFFER YOUR WHOLE LIFE
Clench
IT IS THAT WHICH EVEN CHANGES YOUR WAY OF BEING
I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE YET TO FIND YOUR DREAM BECAUSE YOU KNOW NOT OF THIS VAST WORLD
I HOPE YOU WILL BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS AT THIS CASTLE OF MINE
He is right. I know nothing but the way of the ninja
I WILL TRY...
Hmph...
DO SO,
MY ODD PRINCESS.

LIKELY BECAUSE YOU ENTERTAIN THOSE YOU DEEM EXTRAORDINARY. GOOD BROTHER-EXAMPLES OF THIS ARE WHEN YOU TOOK MITSUHIDE-DONO AND HIDEYOSHI-DONO UNDER YOUR SERVICE.
DOES IT LOOK LIKE THAT?
Not commonplace.

IT SEEMS YOU GROW INCREASINGLY INTERESTED IN THE PRINCESS.
Odd...


'TIS THE OPPOSITE. IF YOU WISH TO BE PAMPERED, COME TELL ME

PRINCESS, IF YOU ARE UNPLEASED WITH MY BROTHER FLINGING YOU ABOUT, PLEASE TELL ME.

It feels like they're toying with me
Hmph...

A dream... was it?
Will a time come when I understand it?
Something that will change my way of being
That I will yearn passionately for...
I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO TRAIN MUCH SINCE I CAME TO AZUCHI.
WHOOSH
but I may be able to do so unseen in this forest
HMM?
That is...

SWOOSH
Tears...?
Clench
WHAT SHOULD I DO... I SHOULD LEAVE,
BUT
This is my first time seeing a man's tears ..

NOBUYUKI-SAMA?

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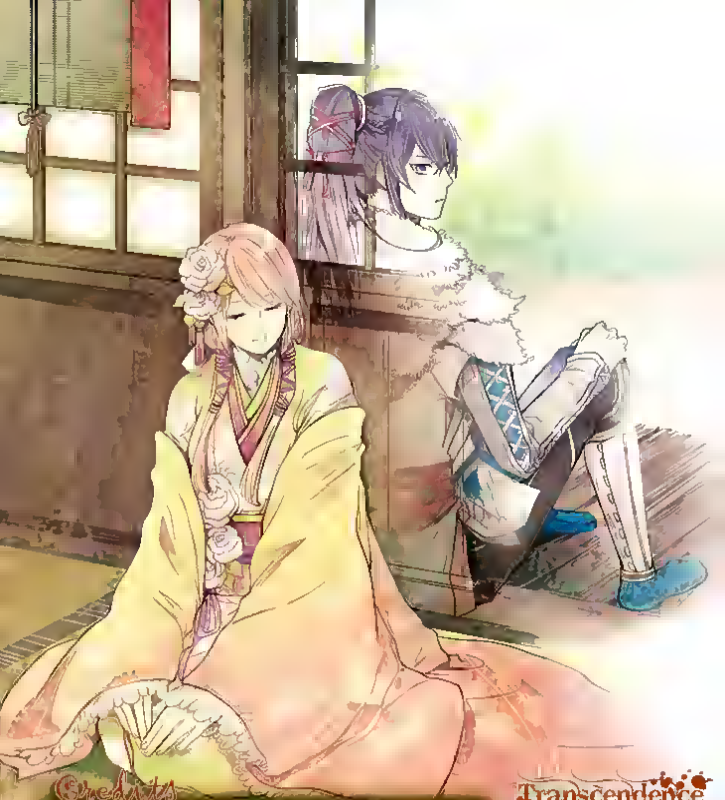
The Oda brothers
Mreow



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Presents

Geten no Hana

Kumada Yuka

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Chapter 03

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